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AUTHOR Rainey, Melvyn D.
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ABSTRACT

A library training program was developed in the Pacific Islands by the University of the South Pacific. During the early years of library training (1972-1980), the professional library staff at the university provided a semi-formal training program for non-professionals in the form of a series of one-week workshops. A total of 72 people completed this program. By 1981, a Certificate in Librarianship consisting of six required courses was offered through distance education. By the mid-1980s, the need for a diploma in library information studies was recognized, and extensive outside expert involvement in the program has strengthened the curriculum substantially. Authors of the curriculum and the course materials now come from a broad range of the world's professional and academic library community. Admission to the new university program requires a specific academic/experiential background, and six out of the nine library information courses are required to complete a degree. Some of the course and details about their implementation are described. Three appendices include geographic size and population of the Pacific Islands, number of graduates by country and by year, and a description of courses for the diploma in library science. (SWC)

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ED 399 940

Library Training in the South Pacific From 1972 - 1993

by
Melvyn D. Rainey
Coordinator, USP Training Program

Although this paper will primarily be about the new Diploma in Library Information Studies which was first offered at the University of the South Pacific in 1990, I feel it is necessary to give a bit of background leading up to its inception so that you might better understand how we arrived at the present program. Let me begin by stating that the University of the South Pacific is celebrating its twenty-fifth birthday this year. The institution first opened its doors to students in February, 1968. As an institution of higher learning, it is unique in that it is one of the few regional universities in the world. Its main campus is in Suva, Fiji and it caters to the needs of twelve Pacific island countries, namely the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Western Samoa, and the newest member, the Marshall Islands which became a member in 1991. The region stretches over an area of eleven million square miles of ocean, an area which is three times the size of Europe. (Appendix 1) The total land mass is roughly one-third again as large as Denmark and the population of the region is just over one and one-half million. (Appendix 1)

To develop a training program which would meet the needs of such a vast area was not an easy task; for while the people of the South Pacific have much in common, each country has its own distinct culture and tradition. The University from its very beginning has always been conscious of this in any attempts it has made to introduce new programs. As well, it has been charged with the maintenance, advancement and dissemination of knowledge by teaching, consultancy, and training responsive to the well-being and needs of its South Pacific communities.

At the present time the University has approximately ten thousand students, and roughly seventy percent of them undertake their studies through distance education. Over the years the University has established University centers in all member countries with the exception of Tokelau which has an office at the Western Samoan Center. The Marshall Islands as yet does not have a center but this will be established in the near future. In all established centers, libraries have been organized and catered to by the main University Library. The center libraries are primarily for the use of students taking distance education courses. In some countries the libraries are under the leadership of people who have completed the Certificate in Librarianship and who are now working towards their Diploma in Library Studies.

Library Training 1972-1980

In the area of library training, the University has played a major role. When the University first opened its doors in 1968, the professional library staff quickly realized that training for junior and intermediate staff and those working in libraries throughout the country was paramount. Within a period of four years the professional staff at the library along with Library Services of Fiji met the challenge by developing the first semi-formal training for non-professionals in Fiji. The Fiji Certificate was in existence from 1972-1980 and although it was primarily for people working in Fiji there were some people from other countries in the region included in the program. The training was in the form of a series of one week workshops and it was this training that was instrumental in fostering interest in developing a program that would benefit the entire USP region. In the eight years it was offered, a total of seventy-two people received their first training and a large number of them have continued on with further training. It is this group that has formed the core of a dedicated group of semi-professional library assistants in the South Pacific.

Certificate in Librarianship 1981-1993

By the middle of the 1970s, it was obvious that a more intensive training program that would include both theory and practical aspects of librarianship was needed throughout the region if libraries were to make an impact on communities. By early 1981, funding for such a program was approved by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). By the second semester of 1981, the first two courses of the six required for completion of the Certificate in Librarianship program were

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offered through distance education. The new program was a vocational program and the teaching/learning mode was carried out by satellite tutorials, face to face tutorials for those students living in the vicinity of the University, written assignments and some regional workshops. In 1984 the Canadian funding ended and the University took over the financial cost of continuing the program. At the end of 1992, one hundred and eighty six people in the USP region had gained the Certificate in Librarianship. (Appendix 2) When the program ends in 1993, it is expected that approximately two hundred people will have completed the certificate. No new students have been accepted into the program since 1990. It is worth noting that at this point in time there is a movement throughout the region to revise, update and reinstate the Certificate as many in the region feel there is still a need for it and that it is a viable entry point at which to begin library studies. Whether or not this will be considered by the University Senate remains to be seen. The Certificate program has been quite successful and most people who completed it are working in libraries. A number of people migrated in 1987 at the time of the military coups and among those leaving the country were librarians; a large number of these people have been able to secure positions in libraries at a paraprofessional level.

Diploma in Library information Studies

By the middle of the 1980s the question had arisen about the need for further training beyond the certificate level. University center directors, government officials, as well as librarians throughout the region saw a need for further training in their respective countries. The University library professional staff under the leadership of Esther Williams, the University Librarian and Donita Simmons, the Senior Assistant Librarian, began working on a proposal for the new program. Simmons (1987) stated that a great amount of preliminary work went into the various areas to facilitate planning and assessing the need for upgrading the current certificate to a diploma; analyzing the components in each of the course books currently being used; identifying instructional components not included in the certificate that should be included in the Diploma, and obtaining input from practicing librarians on the need for a diploma program and its content and methods of making it available to students.

One of the first decisions made at the very outset of discussions was to expand the concept of the program from "Librarianship" to "Library information Studies". This concept was carried through to expanding the term "libraries" to "library information specialist." It was thought the new terms would more accurately define the role of libraries and librarians in the world today. Financial support for the new diploma program came from the Canadian Funding Agency International Development Research Center (IDRC) in 1988. Financial support was given for a three-year period. This money was used for the writing of course materials, purchasing textbooks, and paying the salary of one person. At the end of the three-year period the University accepted the financial responsibility for the continuance of the program.

The Diploma does differ from its two predecessors in a number of ways. Perhaps the greatest strength of the new program has been the involvement of more experts from outside the region. Two course writers from the Australian National University and the University of British Columbia who have had a number of years experience working in the South Pacific and who have a good understanding of the needs of the region were hired, the former on a part-time basis and the latter full time. Four other course writers from the University of Hawaii, the University of Maryland, and the California Lutheran University spent from six months to a year on sabbaticals working on new course materials. As well, a public librarian from New Zealand who is working in Fiji has been involved on a part time basis writing materials. Professional staff from the University Library have been involved in giving feedback and making suggestions about written materials. Having a large number of writers with different backgrounds and expertise involved in preparing courses has been advantageous because it has given the program a broader range of ideas and a richer in-depth appeal for students. Second, the Diploma is a recognized and accredited University program and can be a step towards gaining a degree at the University of the south Pacific. The library information courses are all at a first and second year level. For students who do not wish to continue towards a degree they may stop once they have completed the ten courses required for the Diploma. Those wishing to continue towards a degree will have completed one-half the courses required for an undergraduate degree.

As one would expect the qualifications

for admittance to the Diploma program are stricter than for previous programs. Admission may be granted in any of the following ways:

- candidates who have successfully completed the USP Certificate in Librarianship or its equivalent; or
- candidates who have passed the New Zealand University Entrance or the Senate approved Sixth Form examination and LLF11 - Communication and Study Skills course and have three years relevant work experience; or
- candidates who have obtained credit towards a university degree or diploma may be admitted with certain credit exceptions as the Senate considers appropriate; or
- candidates who pass LLF11 and qualify under the mature age regulations and have three years relevant work experience.

The library information courses total nine in number, six of the nine are required to complete the library requirements towards the diploma. In addition to these six courses, four academic electives must be taken. Students may elect to do four one hundred level courses as electives or they may use a combination of one and two hundred level courses. In choosing electives many students have elected to take management and computer courses, although history, geography, English and sociology are also popular courses.

The first four library information courses cover basic areas of librarianship that are found in overseas professional library schools: the role of libraries in society; selection and collection development; cataloging and classification; and reference/information services. The course in Library information Management and the four specialized courses in School Library information Centers - Academic Library information Centers, Public Library information Centers, and Special Library information Centers are all at the two hundred level. The management course is a required course and in the specialized courses students are required to choose one course although they may take more than one if they so desire. It is being proposed to the School of Humanities of which the Library training program is part, that the four specialization courses be moved from a two hundred level to a three hundred level. This would give students a double major if they wish to complete a degree. Each of the specialized courses is treated in much greater detail than they were in the certificate program, where only the school library course was a separate course. Course descriptions are in Appendix III.

The Diploma began in semester one, 1990 as an on-campus pilot program. Twenty-five students were accepted from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Western Samoa. The Department suggested names of candidates who had completed the Certificate, however the final decision had to be left to the individual countries. Twenty-two students began the program and three students dropped out before the third semester was completed. Scholarship money was provided by the Asia Foundation and the IDRC. This money was used for living accommodation, text books, fees, etc. Governments from the various countries paid airfares for their students.

Each semester two library-information courses were offered and those students who were attending full time took one or two electives in their program as well. To make it possible for a number of students in the Suva area who were working and who could only attend classes after work, the library information classes were held from 5:00pm - 8:00pm on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Class time was divided into lectures, group work, individual presentations and visits to different types of libraries in the Suva area. After each semester, students and the teaching staff evaluated the courses. The course materials were improved upon according to the evaluations and were then given to the University Extension Unit, where a course developer and the course writer concerned collaborated on strengthening the instructional design of the courses to ensure the different learning styles of students could better be met. This work normally takes one semester to complete. It is then offered through the Distance Education Program. Each semester a course is offered, a new assignment booklet is prepared for students.

The overall response from the on-campus students was on the whole positive. For the most part students were keen and active participants in all activities. For many of the students who came from the region and from other parts of Fiji, it was their first time away from home. Homesickness for family and a familiar environment were a problem for some, but on the whole they coped amazingly well.

The first distance education courses were offered in semester one of 1991. Each se-

mester is fifteen weeks in length and there is a two week period at the end for students to revise and prepare for examinations. The University has recently given departments the option of trying a thirty week semester, because of difficulties with mail services among USP countries among other problems, the Department has opted for the longer semester. We believe it will give students more time to spend on their studies and assignments and thus have a better understanding of the materials being covered.

There are one hundred and fifty students at various stages in the diploma. Each semester there are approximately twenty new students who begin their studies. At the time of enrollment counselors in each country travel throughout the region to various centers helping students choose courses. As well, the coordinator of the program spends considerable time pointing out to students the various options available, however, the final decision is left to students. Making such decisions is often very difficult for students because most of them have never been faced with making decisions of this nature.

Evaluation of students is never an easy task and it is particularly difficult to evaluate students who are taking courses by distance learning. Fifty percent of their final mark is based on their four assignments in each course and fifty percent is based on a final examination. Students must have a passing average in both the assignments and the examination. The students studying by distance education are on the whole coping quite well with their studies. There are of course some difficulties which both students and course writers face. For students, the greatest difficulty is with the English language. English is a second and in some cases a third language for many students and while their spoken English is reasonably good they often have difficulty expressing their ideas in written work. Meeting deadlines in getting assignments turned in is a serious problem for many students. Assignments are spaced from six to nine weeks apart depending on the amount of work covered in the assignment but the concept of how much time is required to study the material and do the assignment poses a serious difficulty for students even though we indicate the minimum amount of time they should spend on the work to be studied. The greatest difficulty that course writers encounter in preparing courses is locating material written locally which is suitable. Many of the readings from overseas journals have to be summarized or adapted to meet local needs. To be able to write materials at a level which can be understood by students and at the same time not insult their intelligence is not an easy task.

The Diploma has given graduates the opportunity to gain new in-depth knowledge in the area of computers and this will be a basis which will help them keep pace with technological changes that are taking place at a rapid pace in the South Pacific. The program has also helped to build their self-confidence and hopefully their professional understanding of what library information centers are about. The Diploma program provides people with appropriate training at the semi-professional level and thus will help them to more realistically meet the informational needs of the region. The training at the diploma level is helping to bridge the gap between the library assistant and the professional librarian. The offering of the diploma through distance education will allow students to gain their qualifications with a minimum loss of income and personal dislocation, and furthermore the program will reach the greatest number of people for the least amount of financial resources.

Future Training

What does the future hold for the library information specialist in the USP member countries of the South Pacific? I believe that we can take an optimistic view for the future. As countries in the region continue to develop, there will be an ever greater need for well-developed library information centers and library information specialists. The job market at the present time is reasonably bright. An area where library information centers are likely to continue to expand is in schools. Good library information centers in schools are an essential part of a good education. Young people who graduate from schools who have had the privilege of using well-stocked, well-organized and well-run library information centers are the basis for improving the ability and interest of library information users. Special library information centers in government, industry, and the private sector are also likely to continue to develop as society realizes the need for a greater variety and amount of information.

At this time, it is difficult to say what type of training programs will be developed in the next decade. It is not likely that a new program will emerge before 2005. The question

of developing a professional degree program has been mentioned, but that hardly seems likely at the present time because the financial costs are beyond the University's capacity. The lack of resource materials as well as human resources and physical space makes such an undertaking impractical. There is also the question of whether or not enrollment would be sufficient to support such an undertaking. It is more reasonable to expect that as people complete their undergraduate degree along with their diploma they could be sent overseas to gain their professional qualifications. In the long run this would be less costly and for students it would be an opportunity to gain a more international outlook about the profession.

During the next decade it is reasonable to assume there will be a greater number of in-service professional workshops for practicing library information specialists. Such workshops are likely to involve the technological advances that are beginning to find their way into South Pacific libraries. Outside USP the growth and use of computer applications has made a considerable impact in government structures as well as in the private sector. by and large with the exception of the University of the South Pacific and the south Pacific Commission, libraries have lagged behind in technological advancement.

At this point in the training program we feel that we have extended ourselves to the very limit of our resources, and by 1995 we hope to be able to do a thorough evaluation of all aspects of the program.

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Appendix 1

Country	Area (sq km)*	Population**
Cook Islands	240	17,463
Fiji	18, 272	747,000
Kiribati	726	72,298
Marshall Islands	171	45,563
Nauru	21	8,100
Niue	258	2,532
Solomon Islands	29,785	325,600
Tokelau	12	1,703
Tonga	697	103,000
Tuvalu	26	8,364
Vanuatu	12,189	142,630
Western Samoa	2,934	157,158
Total	65,331	1,631,411

*Land Area taken from the Pacific Islands Yearbook, 1989.
**Population taken from the Statesman's Yearbook 1992-93.

Appendix 2

Number of graduates by Country from 1981-1992.

Country	Graduates
Cook Islands	5
Fiji	120
Kiribati	2
Marshall Islands	New member to the University region in 1991
Nauru	4
Niue	2
Solomon Islands	8
Tokelau	-
Tonga	6
Tuvalu	-
Vanuatu	4
Western Samoa	13
Ex-Patriots in the region	21
New Caledonia	1

Number of Graduates by Year

1982	-	15
1983	-	26
1984	-	14
1985	-	15
1986	-	17
1987	-	18
1988	-	16
1989	-	10
1990	-	5
1991	-	20
1992	-	30
Total	-	186

Appendix 3

Description of Courses for the Diploma in Library Information Studies

HUC01: Introduction to Library Information Studies

Discusses the library and its functions; the role of the librarian; professionalism; the library in society; the library in the total information environment; history of libraries; history of information and technology; intellectual freedom and library information. there are a number of readings included in this course.

HU102: Building the Library Information Center Collection

A review of the process involved in selecting books and other resources for library collections; introduction to the book trade and selection tools; budgets for books and other resources; preparation of a selection policy for various types of libraries; collecting archival resources; censorship; evaluation of the selection process; automation of selection procedures. There are a number of readings included in this course.

HU103: Organizing Library Information Center Resources

This course covers descriptive cataloguing; ISBD, subject classification, the Dewey Decimal Classification and filing. Both books and non-print materials are covered in considerable detail, organizing archival materials and automation. Students are expected to purchase the latest editions of *Sears Subject Headings, Abridged Dewey Decimal Classification, ALA Filing Rules* and the *Concise AACR*.

HU104: Library Information Services

Includes attitudes toward library services; the reference process, an in-depth look at various information sources; reference and information services; archival services; circulation services; evaluation of library services and the automation of library services.

HU205: Management of the Library Information Center

Covers the theories and principles of management; problems and issues in library management; statement of mission, goals and objectives; management of library functions, staffing; data gathering, budgeting; planning and maintaining facilities, equipment and resources; communication skills; accountability; setting priorities; time management; evaluation and library automation.

Options

Students are to choose one of the options from HU206 to HU209.

HU206: The School Library Information Center

Discusses the purpose of the school library information center; emphasis on the role of the teacher librarian as a teaching member of the school staff. Emphasis on cooperative planning and teaching with classroom teachers. Discusses the traditional activities of selecting and organizing materials. Emphasis is placed on developing programs in conjunction with what is being taught in the school; cooperation between the school library and the community; automation of the school library.

HU207: The Academic Library Information Center

Discusses the role of the academic library information center in tertiary education; academic library functions; role of the academic librarian; selection; organization; services; management; promotion; reporting; communication skills; setting priorities; time management; evaluation of the library and its programs; automation of the academic library.

HU208: The Public Library Information Center

Discusses the purposes and role of the public library information center in the community; role of the public librarians; selection, organization; services; management; promotion; reporting; communication skills; setting priorities; time management; evaluation and automation of the public library information center.

HU209: The Special Library Information Center

Discusses the purpose of the special library information center; types of special libraries, the role of the special librarian; selection; organization; services; management, promotion; reporting; communication skills;

setting priorities; time management, evaluation and automation of the special library information center.

Students must choose four academic electives to complete their Diploma studies.